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Media Release

November 19, 2009

Biden shuts down Sussex County drug haven

Wilmington, DE – Attorney General Beau Biden announced today that the Delaware Department of Justice has secured the closure of a property under Delaware’s Nuisance Abatement Act. At the Department’s request a Superior Court judge closed 28565 Blueberry Lane, near Frankford.

“This property is a poster child for how drug crime and violence destabilizes neighborhoods and threatens the safety of our families,” Attorney General Biden stated. We will continue to take aggressive action against property owners anywhere in Delaware who allow crime to flourish and bring down the quality of life.”

At a hearing today in Sussex County Superior Court, the Department of Justice provided evidence that the property has been the site of constant drug trafficking, gambling activity, and violence over a period of several years. Among the activities at the property were an armed robbery during which shots were fired in the presence of an 8 year-old child, a stabbing, and a drive-by shooting during which bullets entered the house and hit a couch in the presence of 6 month-old and 2 year-old children. Since October 2004, police have visited the property at least 18 times to apprehend fugitives believed to be on-site. Judge T. Henley Graves agreed that the property presented an immediate threat to the public, health, safety, and welfare and issued a temporary abatement order shuttering the property and banning anyone from the premises.

The Department received active support and cooperation in this case from Delaware State Police, the Governor’s Task Force, residents, and Representative John Atkins, whose district includes this property.

In August, 2007 Attorney General Biden launched a statewide effort to combat crime in Delaware under the state’s Drug Nuisance and Social Vices Abatement Act. Under the Nuisance Abatement Act, enforcement actions can take a variety of forms, including closure of a property. The Delaware Department of Justice identifies nuisance properties up and down Delaware through its own investigations and in cooperation with state and local police agencies, local authorities, civic associations, and neighborhood residents. Through its enforcement actions, the Department gives property owners the choice of voluntarily cooperating to clean up the illegal activity, or defending themselves in court and being forced to clean up the crime by court order.

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